PLAYBOT

TRANSFORMERS PIN-UP ZINE

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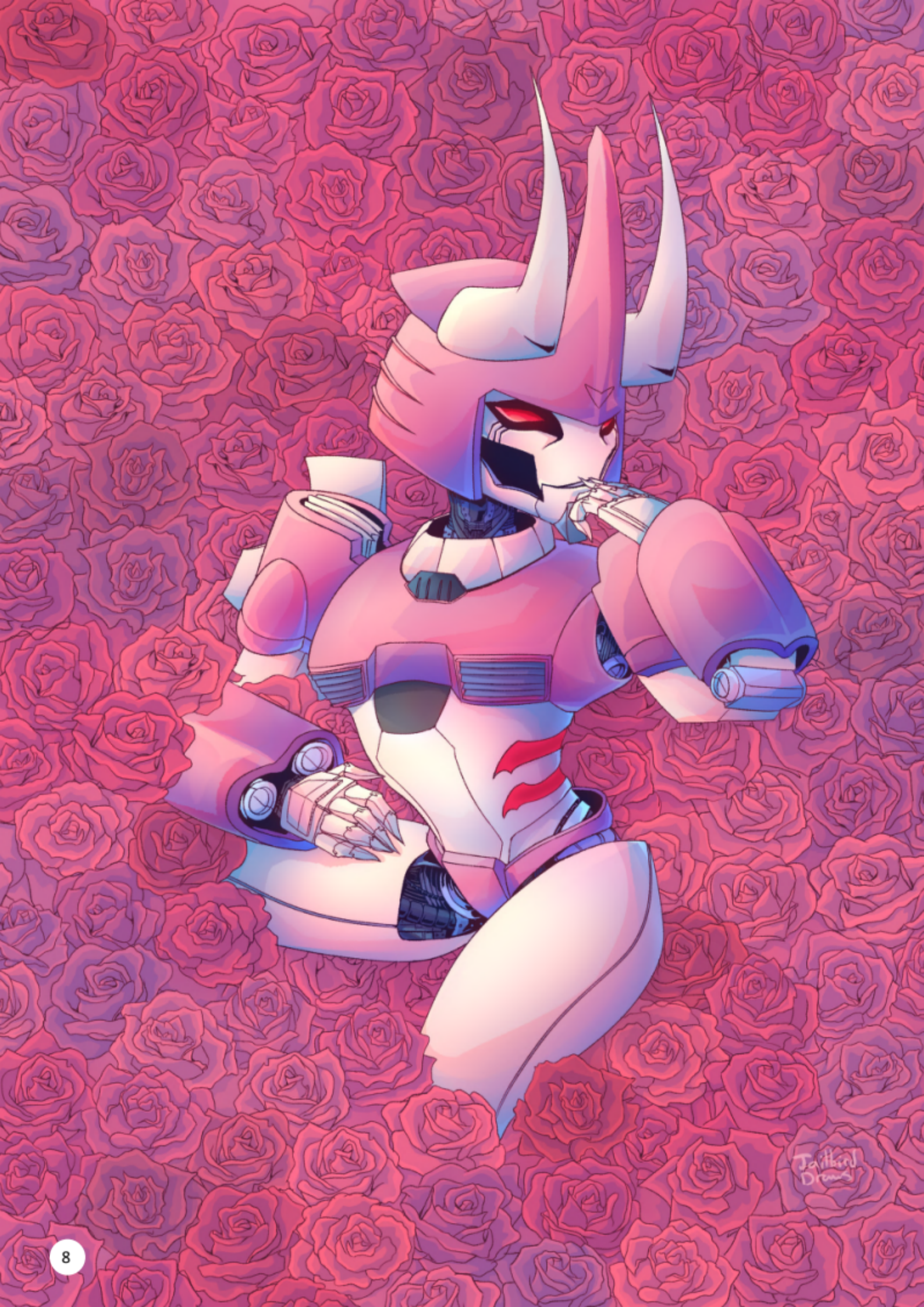

FEATURE: CYBERTRON'S HOTTEST NEW PIN-UP MODEL!

**Megatron is represented by Rodimus, his manager and co-captain aboard the Lost Light, due to security and privacy concerns.*

INTERVIEWER: Thank you for making the time, Rodimus. It's been thirteen stellar cycles since Megatron denounced the Decepticons and defected to the Autobots, hasn't it? There were those who doubted the truth of his decision and the wisdom of having him on board a ship traveling the galaxy, but his recent journey from supervillain to pin-up superstardom has been just incredible. I think the first thing we'd like to know is, well...how it all began!

RODIMUS: Ah. Of course! You'll never believe it, but it was completely by accident-

The credits had finished rolling, and Rewind was about to switch his projector off when Swerve, the last of the movie night attendees to leave, caught sight of the recording that had started playing automatically after.

"Rewind?" Swerve's voice was pitched unusually high. "When- when was that from?"

Rewind paused, his servo dropping from where he'd been fiddling with the side of his helm. The clip was from the time the crew had landed on Perskon-5, a volcanic little planetoid that had rapidly become popular among mechanoid races for its hot oil springs. Everyone had come down to enjoy a soak - even Ultra Magnus.

Even Megatron.

The recording panned down that gunmetal-gray frame, trickles of oil sliding sensuously along the curves of gleaming black pelvic armor. The ex-warlord was lounging by the side of a pool, having emerged to cool down. His arms were raised, large hands propped casually behind his helm which was thrown back, emphasizing the strong lines of the cables of his throat. One knee had been raised, and drops of oil slicked down towards the glistening panel of his array. Dark red optics were dimmed, and steam rose in sinuous curls from his heated plating.

Swerve came up to stand beside Rewind, visor fixed on the screen. "Could- " the minibot had to reboot his intake to clear the static that had fritzed into it. "Could you send me a copy of that?"

INTERVIEWER: That's amazingly serendipitous. I had no idea that that famous photo wasn't posed! It went absolutely viral over the Galactic Net, as we all know.

RODIMUS: Yeahhh. He's a natural.

INTERVIEWER: Speaking of natural, there was that one other shot that I daresay surprised many of us who might still have been skeptical of Megatron's new attitude towards non-mechanical places.

RODIMUS: Which do you mea- oh. Ohhh. Well, between you and me, that picture also had a real interesting backstory!

The next planet they stopped at was organic, the surface of which appeared to be covered with a thick layer of wet dirt. Brainstorm insisted that the readings for energon ore were off the charts on his sensor, which was how every mech above average height found themselves set to ploughing through several meters of mud. By the time Cyclonus struck ground and broke off a large-enough sample to bring back to the ship for refining and testing, all of them were completely covered in sludge.

"Hold it right there!" Crosshairs cried, just as Megatron reached the landing ramp. "You should all hose down before coming back on board. We'll be cleaning up after all of ya for the next deca-cycle otherwise!"

Ultra Magnus considered the suggestion before agreeing gravely that it was sound. A large hose was hooked up to the main solvent supply and thrown down the ramp, and then what looked like the entire population of the ship - every single mech who hadn't been put to digging - showed up and piled around. There was a strange ripple of anticipation in the air.

Whirl seized the hose first, washing himself perfunctorily with a loud curse for the freezing temperature of unheated solvent. It was with a suspicious gleam in his optic that he finished and spun about.

And unceremoniously turned the full force of the spray onto Megatron.

The liquid hit Megatron square in the middle of his broad chest, splitting off in arcs that seemed to move in slow motion. Some caught his faceplates as he turned his helm from side to side, mouth open in a small gasp for the cold. The solvent spilled down his armor, washing away the mud and trickling down almost obscenely to lower places. Rugged black fingers traced the decorative spirals on the gray chestplate as Megatron wiped himself down, hands moving across his frame to the seams where narrow waist joined the flare of hip-plating.

Somewhere from within the watching crowd, there was the audible click of an image capture. And then a few more.

INTERVIEWER: Well, he's certainly doing a lot to repair his image. Enhance it, even. I'm sure I speak for everyone when I say we simply cannot wait to see these exclusive new photos that you've got for us.

RODIMUS: Mm-mmm. Worth every darn credit, even if I do say so myself. Here, let me show you a preview...

*"I know what you're doing," Megatron said tartly, slanting a heated look back at his co-captain. "I can **see** you."*

Rodimus put up both hands in surrender, camcorder dangling. "It's your own fault for looking this good," he grinned, looking at Megatron kneeling at the foot of the couch, bent over as he strained to reach the datapad that Rodimus had 'accidentally' kicked beneath it. From this angle, the curve of Megatron's aft and the seductive arch of his backstrut were on full display.

"I'm guessing this has to do with my 'rehabilitation' to the galaxy at large?" Megatron grumbled, finally gripping the edge of the datapad between the tips of two fingers. "Or else a furthering of my contribution towards filling the ship's coffers?"

Rodimus plucked the datapad from Megatron's servos, unable to help a laugh.

"All of that, Megs. I'd go so far as adding 'morale booster for the crew' to the resume. You won't believe how many requests I've gotten for a shot of your- "

"And this is keeping the peace on the ship?"

Rodimus chuckled. "Petty scuffles down by 60%!"

*"**...Fine.** Anything else you had in mind?"*

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- 1984 -
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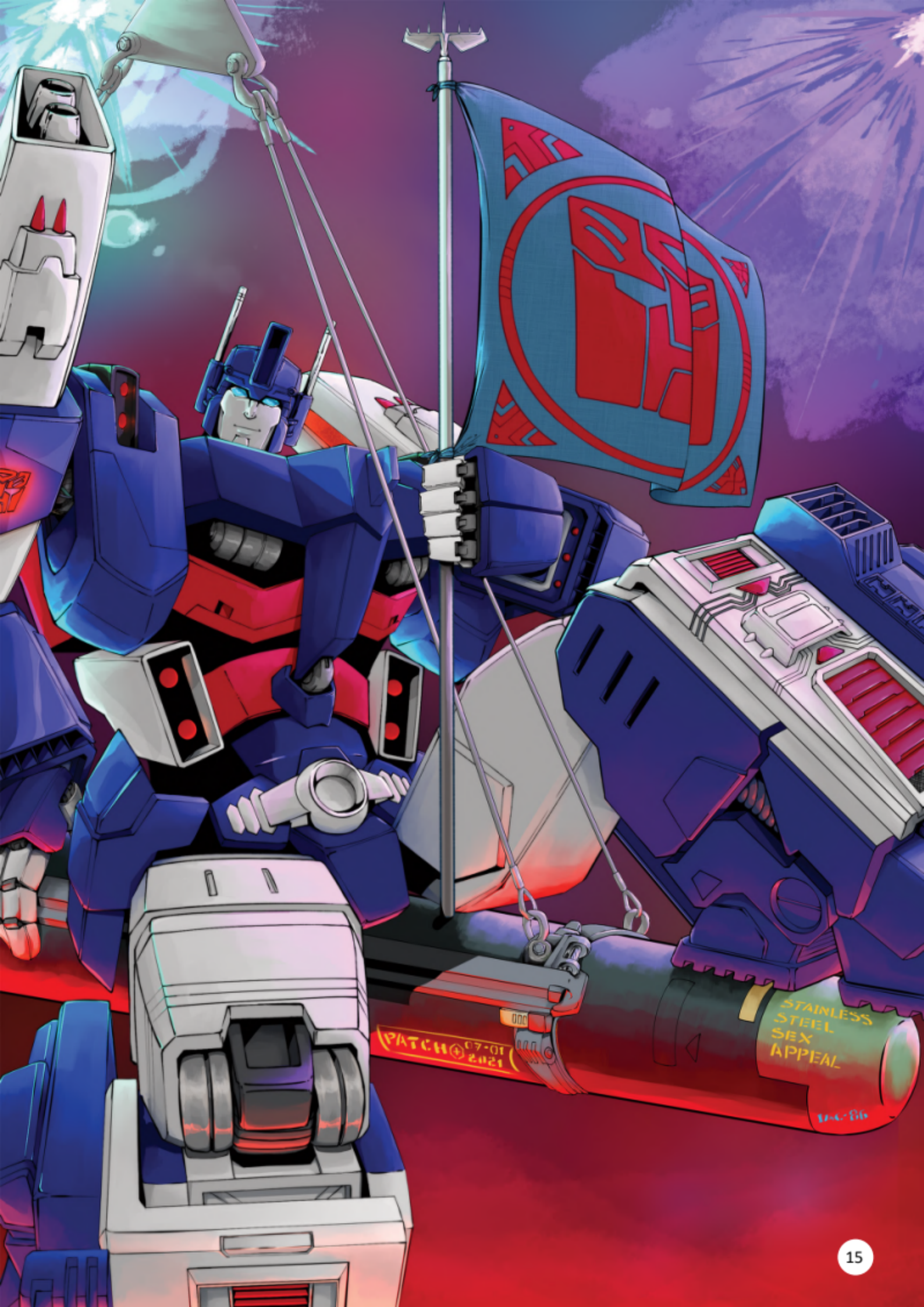
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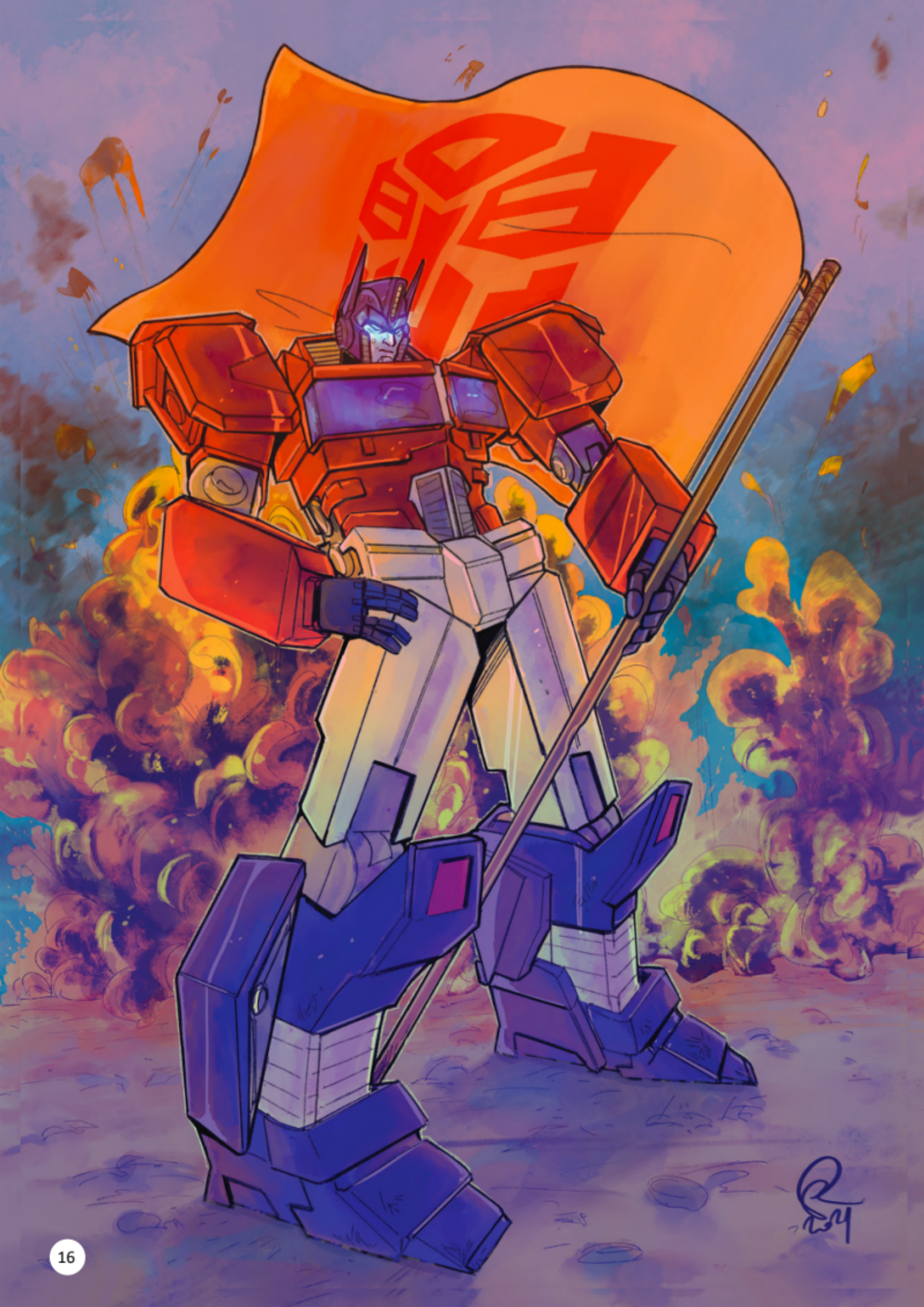

KOLKULAR, KAON — KAON IS A CITY OF CHANGE

Throughout the history of Cybertron, it has been central to many turning points in our society—the first large-scale energon mine, the first specialized miner frame, the first industrialized energon refinery. All of these changes started right here in Kaon. However, in recent solar cycles, it has become increasingly clear that Kaon has turned from a city-state with a bright, energy-rich future ahead, into a turbulent, decrepit area of corruption.

Considering that, it should not be considered too surprising that Kaon is once again the center of change, although this time it is of a much more political nature than an industrial one.

I happened to have the opportunity to travel to Kaon recently to see what all those murmurings of uprisings in the famed gladiator pits are all about. Kaon is a hot city, with the mines and refineries below bellowing heat to the city above, although the hopeless mood of its streets leave you feeling cold. That all changes, however, once you enter the gladiator rings.

Loud, rowdy, and a sense of life that feels surprising when entering a place so closely associated with death. There's a sense of hope in the air. I began to understand why once I saw the mech who was responsible for all this, speaking in the center of the gladiator ring.

Megatron carries with him an awe-inspiring presence. He speaks of revolution, of equality for all frame-types, of tearing down the caste system. "You are being deceived," is how he ends his speech. The crowd goes wild, cheering for him as he exits the arena stoically.

The anti-Senate sentiments coming out of Kaon and other surrounding cities are nothing new, but to have them be stated so blatantly? For Megatron to so bluntly say that the Senate lies? It's certainly a change that I doubt will be forgotten for millenia to come.

The Kaonites weren't too fond of me, a visiting journalist from Uraya, but ultimately, I managed to convince them that I truly did just want to talk, not slander, and I was allowed to talk to the mech of the joor, Megatron himself. He was even more intimidating in person, with the broad frame of a miner, the weapons of a gladiator, and the smooth, charismatic confidence of a politician. It took me several kliks to work up the courage to begin talking to him.

Megatron was surprisingly easy to converse with, once I got over the initial barrier of intimidation. He's intelligent, well-spoken, and humble. While the full transcript of our interview is available online, I will share with you what I believed to be the most thought-provoking part of our conversation.

PLAYBOT: [The Decepticon Movement] began with your treatise, *Towards Peace*.

MEGATRON: Yes. I wrote it when I still worked in the mines underneath Nova Point. I can't say I ever imagined it would have the impact it has had thus far.

PLAYBOT: I wanted to ask about a particular quote that made quite the ruckus upon the initial release. *"Reject your work. Reject your alt mode. Resist the system. And your 'betters'? You have none. We are all equal. And we have a right to decide how to live our lives."*

MEGATRON: [chuckles] Yes, I can see how that one would be brought up in conversation repeatedly. If I recall my text correctly, I spent the previous several paragraphs deconstructing the philosophy of the caste system, of the taxonomy. I heard quite a few reviews from Iacon talking about my 'blasphemous rhetoric'. However, I did put some research into theology before I wrote that section, and there is nothing in the Primal Prophecies about how we should use our alt modes. They say being treated by a medic with tank treads would be concerning. Would they say the same thing about me? A miner who writes poetry and political treatises. They find it concerning as well, though not for the reasons they claim—they find it concerning because if the populous starts questioning the taxonomy, starts questioning why it exists, that is what, to quote myself, *"the Senate and the Functionists fear most, because they know that their world would collapse if people arrived at the answer."*

PLAYBOT: That's certainly a contentious opinion to hold.

MEGATRON: The very fact that you consider my opinion contentious, my opinion being that the Senate is wrong, is exactly my point. The status quo is so deeply ingrained within our society that even the slightest deviation is seen as someone trying to start a conflict. That, ultimately, is what my movement is about: with equality comes freedom. Freedom of speech, occupation, movement, whatever it may be—so long as the Functionalists have a say in the Senate, that goal is unreachable.

PLAYBOT: *"We have a right to decide how to live our lives-"* That's what you said in your treatise.

MEGATRON: Yes. And I did not say it lightly.

Megatron carries with him an unbridled passion for seeing the world change, for pushing boundaries and carrying his comrades with him to a better place. His words carry weight, and his dissection of modern society hits you directly in the spark. Megatron fully intends to change the world, and I can only imagine what lengths he will go to do so.

The full transcript of my interview with Megatron can be found in full on our website.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH THE AWARD-WINNING ENGRAVING ARTIST SUNSTREAKER OF KAON

At first glance, the studio looks empty, almost abandoned. The space is well-lit, with focused lights on the main workbench. Aside from some chairs near the entrance, obviously meant as a waiting area, the studio appears otherwise bare.

Look closer, however, and it's obvious that the space is occupied, and its minimalistic décor and organization becomes apparent. The walls are painted in subtle shades of red, with large black cabinets breaking up the monotony. Behind each cabinet door lies a meticulously arranged assortment of tools, spools of colourful metals, cleaning supplies, fixatives, and finishing waxes. A small consultation area is set off into one corner of the studio, equipped with a monitor that cycles through exquisite engraving designs.

This workspace is the domain of Sunstreaker, one of the most renowned engraving and inlay artists currently operating in Kaon. His rise to prominence was capped recently when he was awarded the Solus Prime Excellence Award for Engraving. We had a chance to speak with him a few weeks after the award ceremony.

PLAYBOT: How did you get started with engraving?

SUNSTREAKER: I used to work in a body shop. My job was to match colours for customers who needed body work done. We would occasionally get a customer who had inlay engravings that had either been damaged and needed repair, or which had degraded. We didn't have anyone in the shop who could handle them, so I took some classes and did an apprenticeship with an inlay artist. That's when I realized this was something I was interested in doing on my own.

PLAYBOT: Tell us a bit about the process for designing and applying an engraving.

SUNSTREAKER: I work very closely with the client. Engraving is difficult to undo without damaging your plating, so I want to make sure the client is happy with what I'm going to do. I watch their transformation sequence, make notes of how their parts fit together, and then use that information to develop a design. Once the client agrees to the design, I perform the engraving in one session, and then do the inlay in a second session. If it's a complicated design, we might need a third or even fourth session to finish it.

PLAYBOT: How long do these sessions last?

SUNSTREAKER: It depends on the complexity of the design, obviously. If there is a lot of intricate work, it can take upwards of a full day for the engraving to be done. Simpler designs can be done in a few hours. As for the inlay, I never rush that. If I need multiple sessions to complete the work, then the client needs to come in for multiple sessions. Cutting corners just means the inlay won't last as long as it should, and I refuse to do shoddy work.

PLAYBOT: Your engraving and inlay designs are very different than typical engravings. Can you describe them for us?

SUNSTREAKER: It's almost criminal how little thought goes into some of the designs I've seen. So many of them are purposefully placed on the body so that they can only be seen in one mode, or they're static and only appear on one panel. Then you have the ones that can be seen in all modes, but those are mostly linear shapes, like the circuitry etchings that are popular right now. But it's the same design in either mode. I knew that with a little thought you could create a design that would be different in both modes. Why not make the extra effort and look good no matter what mode you're in?

PLAYBOT: Can you talk about some of your designs? For example, this one, which won the Solus Prime award for you.

SUNSTREAKER: [silent for a moment] I created this design for a client who was part of Croaton's crew. The client was deeply affected by the loss of Croaton, and wanted some way to remember his sacrifice. So when the client is in root mode, Croaton is engraved across his back, reaching towards the stars. And when the client transforms into his alt mode, Croaton vanishes. Instead, running down both of his side panels and across his hood, the Croaton Cloud remains, sparkling in its orbit around Cybertron.

PLAYBOT: It's a gorgeous piece, and it's obvious why it won this prestigious award. I'm sure it's also very meaningful.

SUNSTREAKER: [shrug] I suppose. The client liked it. It is rather well done.

PLAYBOT: I notice that you don't have any engravings yourself, which is a bit unusual for engraving artists. Is there a reason for that?

SUNSTREAKER: If I was going to get an engraving, I'd want the best artist in Kaon to do the work. And since I obviously can't work on myself, that's that. Besides, there's no point trying to improve upon perfection.

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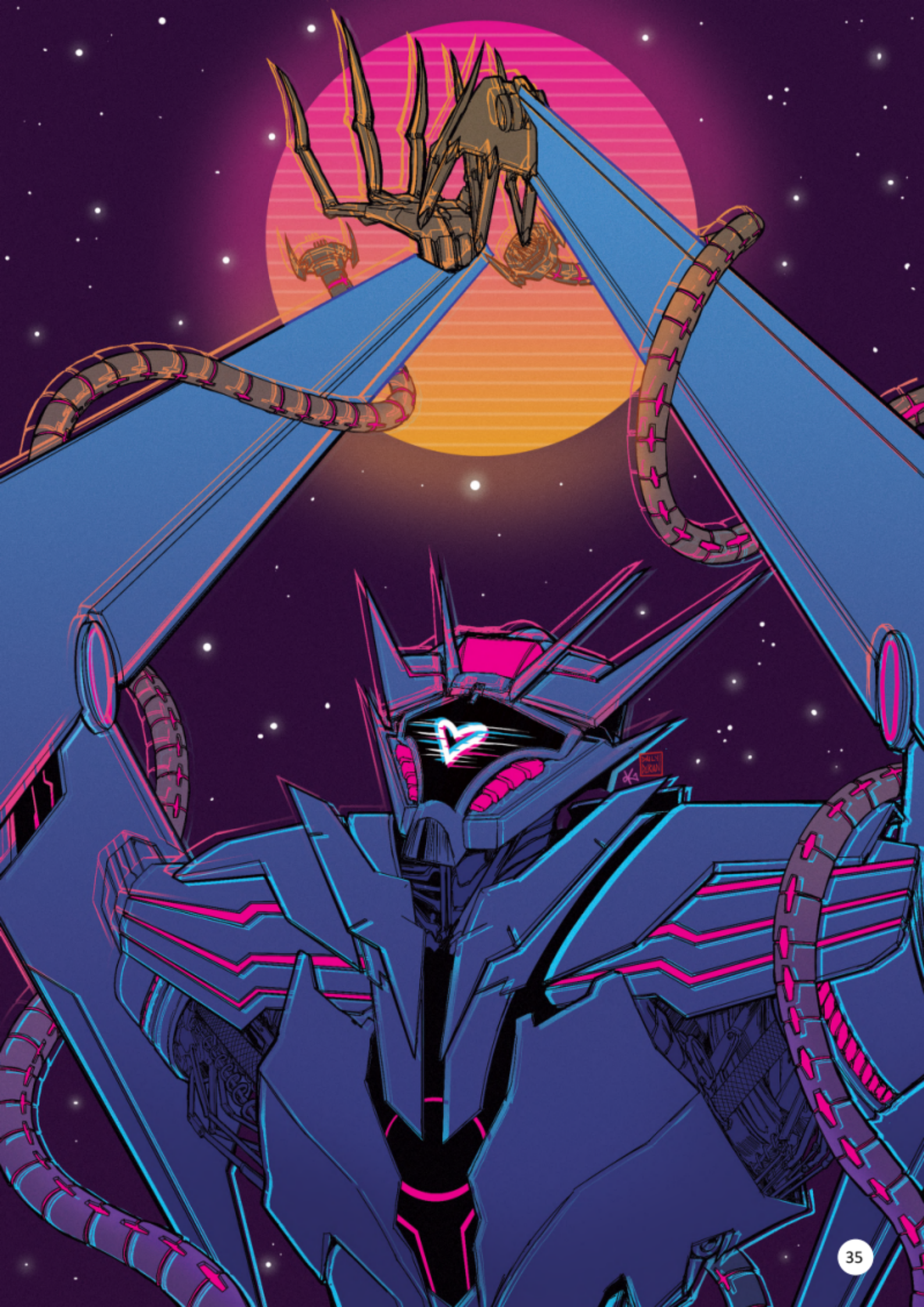

WHY HELLO, OFFICERS. WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE PROBLEM?
MY HUSBAND HAS BEEN MURDERED? HOW VERY...TRAGIC TO HEAR..!

DULY APPOINT
DANSC 2021

SENATOR RATBAT: AN INFILTRATED SENATE?

The bar I meet the Senator in is on the corner between the Senate building and the long string of towers and offices that crawls along between the government sector and civilian. The street outside is crowded out with transport-frames and business mechs; by the glass fronted door sits a mech with a tattered green tarp thrown over his shoulders. By his peds there's a sign - *Support a Monoformer, Buy Me Booze* - and a bottle. The look he gives me when I open the door is one of expectation. I drop a credit chip in his hand as I pass him. No doubt it's just one of many. Inside, the Senator is waiting in what the waiter who shows me there tells me is his favorite booth. He leans in as he does, amused, to say the Senator's here "Every fourth day of the decacycle."

Such a lunch habit would be an extravagance on any normal mech's budget. On Ratbat's it's simply the expectation of his station.

The mech in question is already waiting for me. He's sitting low in the booth's seat, arm thrown over the back and thighs spread wide in a show of vulgarity only allowed by his position. If he were anyone else, a service worker or miner, he would have been shown the door long before I came to slide into the seat across from him. The mech rolls the stem of his cocktail glass between his fingers, watching the engex inside swirl in slow whirls of glittering blue.

RATBAT: So. You're the little reporter who's asked my staff seventeen times for an interview.

PLAYBOT: A quote.

RATBAT: And you've got yourself an interview. And aren't you a pretty model for it?

PLAYBOT: My looks aren't part of this interview, Senator.

RATBAT: It's my looks that got me my seat - I look like the right kind of mech for them to vote for. Doubtless it's part of why you got yours, too.

Here a waiter slides a drink onto a table, pretty and expensive. The waiter is some kind of common-format car. I wouldn't be able to pick him out of a crowd.

PLAYBOT: We should be getting to what I came here for. You're one of the first senators to take their seat after the war. How have things changed since you took your chair?

RATBAT: Is that really what you want to know? Not something more interesting? More personal?

PLAYBOT: I'm here to do a job -

RATBAT: You're here to ask me about myself. Talking about work - it's such a drag.

Watching him drink is a curious thing. I doubt the engex in the glass has any true effect on his frame. It's something I've noted in many who fought the war. I can't tell if it's because they consume more, or if it's simply that mechs were built differently, before. If there is some sort of defect in our modern bodies, without the pull of constant conquest to build us stronger. He's as sharp as he would be sober.

PLAYBOT: You said before that it was just your looks that won you your chair in the Senate, but when someone looks at your voting numbers, your polls - you're one of very few mechs in the Senate whose seat has never been in danger of being overturned.

RATBAT: The Infiltrators.

PLAYBOT: I wasn't going to say - but yes. It's from their support, isn't it?

RATBAT: Everyone thinks it. Or knows it. Starscream likes to go on about it.

He waves down a waiter. Another drink is dropped in front of me. I haven't finished the first one. He doesn't seem to care.

RATBAT: The Troopers vote for me because I listen. If it weren't for that - well I'm not the *only* one of us with optics for power. But I'm here, and I'm the only one here.

PLAYBOT: Why? What makes you different from your frame mates?

RATBAT: Because it's not the frame, pretty mech. It's making people see that frame - the ones you want to - and the ones you don't? Being so much better than them that they can't do slag about you being up there with 'em.

PLAYBOT: So you consider yourself a fighter?

RATBAT: I consider myself someone worth fighting, and that's worth damn more than being someone who thinks they can fight. I was in the war, but I was also from before the war - when what you all call imperialism was our way of life.

PLAYBOT: Do your framemates agree?

RATBAT: The canon fodder, you mean. The spies. The not-quite frontline. We knew what we were. And when the war ended, we knew - well. What you thought we were. Someone needed to make sure we didn't end up in the trash heap where you wanted to send us. They choose me because they see the war in me. I made a pretty soldier.

PLAYBOT: Is that what you think?

RATBAT: It was what I *saw*. Very different, those two things.

PLAYBOT: Do you think you've seen things change since the war?

I watch Ratbat drag the tip of his claw over the rim of his still-full glass. It sings for him, a pure, chiming sound that rings through the dimly lit restaurant. Then his finger slides too far to the right, and I watch as the glass tips and falls. Engex sloshes out over the side and pools, sticky and slow, on the table top.

RATBAT: No. No, I don't.

He calls a waiter over to clean up the spill, but his mouth is in a firm set line I've never seen in any of his recorded public appearances. When he sits up he looks more like a soldier than the lounging, feckless Senator he pretends to be. I watch as he tips the waiter a credchip for cleaning up the mess, stands, and brushes down his front.

It's only after he's left that I realize he's left me with an open tab to cover.

It really was only to be expected.

Just Desserts

Scandal in the Making!
The head of the Decepticon Justice Division goes straight for the heart of the cause.
-Languidly

Jo North

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TOP TEN HOTTEST DECEPTICON COMMANDERS

Engage your speculation module and picture the scene: you're in a mission briefing. It doesn't matter which one. You could be preparing to assault Iacon itself or you could be guarding a minor mining outpost; what matters is that your commanding officer is giving you vital information necessary to your continued survival and all you're thinking is 'damn, I would totally hit that'.

Don't lie — we've all been there. Nearly every single one of you has been in this exact situation, and how could you not? A powerful and unyielding specimen of Decepticon might ordering you to get your cannon out would shake even the sternest of sparks.

But whose cannon is bigger? Who's the most powerful, the most unyielding? From 'admire from afar' handsome to 'fall at their feet' sexy, which Decepticon commander is the hottest? There are right answers, and I am going to prove it.

---

10 SCORPONOK

If you like them big then Scorponok is the one for you. He's approximately the size of a non-sentient shuttle with a thrillingly exotic alt-mode, and his unusual hobby of consorting with horrible flesh creatures would ensure the two of you would never run out of things to talk about.

Our newer readers might not even remember that Scorponok was briefly the leader of the entire Decepticon army. He ended his short stint as Lord of Destruction at the slender mercies of the Terrorcons, when Megatron came back and deposed him with great prejudice. It wasn't long after this that he abandoned the cause in favour of pursuing organic science. Better him than me!

9 THUNDERWING

In the early days of the Decepticon revolution, Thunderwing worked tirelessly to bring attention to the fuel crisis. How this led to him augmenting himself with an experimental bonding process that drove him mad, I'll never know.

Thunderwing was certainly a statuesque Decepticon, cutting a striking silhouette with a broad chest and a boldly purple sweep of wings. He loses points for burning 90% of the planet to cinders, but we still appreciate the breadth of his thighs.

8 BLUDGEON

Bludgeon's mysterious attitude and deadly swordsmanship have intrigued many a Decepticon, despite him looking like the second coming of Mortilus. For many Decepticons, that's the whole point! His distinctive frame never fails to turn heads.

Bludgeon is a consummate hunter, leading troops in pursuit of Metroplex, commanding Monstructor, and even going toe to toe with Optimus Prime himself. It's hard not to swoon when faced with such an impressive resume!

7 DEADLOCK

Many readers might be surprised to see Deadlock on a list of Decepticon commanders, infamous as he is for bungling the assault on Dabola so badly Megatron never gave him a solo command again. I simply couldn't bear to leave him out, though, because he is very hot.

From the tips of his finials, to his feet, to the muzzle of his gun, every inch of Deadlock is deadly. You can't help but be taken in by his cocky smile and his self-assured attitude when you meet him - not that his confidence is unearned. Megatron recruited Deadlock personally, and he's often been looked to as an ideal example of Decepticon bloodlust.

Not an ideal example of Decepticon command, though.

6 SHOCKWAVE

I knew a mech that was a fan of a broad chestplate once. I think he would have died if he had ever stood in the same room as Shockwave. The mech is twice as wide as me. It's astounding.

The leading Decepticon scientist neither knows nor cares that he is hot. He is simply interested in the pursuit of knowledge above all else, and would be more likely to consign you to the labs as a test subject than date you. I'm done with all this shooting stuff, you know? Take me now, Shockwave.

Brains, brawn and casual indifference.
What's not to love?

5 MEGAEMPRESS

Who could forget when the mighty Megaempress lead the Decepticon forces at Shanrigia IV to victory in the absence of their commander?

Her broad and powerful frame might be intimidating, but one waggle of her fire ladder-slash-tail would melt even the sternest of sparks. You'd be hard pressed to find another Cybertronian who can balance cuteness and deadliness like she can!

Self-admittedly styled after the Lord of Destruction himself, Megaempress now uses the field promotion she earned that day to lead her combiner team and other experimental troops into battle against our enemies, scoring win after win against the Autobot scum. There's no doubt about it; this lovely lady is one to watch.

4 STARSCREAM

For a lot of Decepticons, Starscream might win this competition. He might even have won it for me, but our second in command has a screw loose. I guess some of you might find that sexy, but I haven't survived this long by getting involved with the insane.

One of the finest examples of aerial engineering flying today, in the thick of battle he's graceful, yet deadly, striking with precision and stepping on Autobot dreams with an elegantly turned thruster. The bold angles of his wings might turn many heads, but his overwhelming drive to defeat Lord Megatron by any means necessary and usurp his place as commander speaks of an obsessive personality that I am just not prepared to manage.

3 SOUNDWAVE

The hyper-competent Soundwave has been a Decepticon since Decepticon became a thing you could be, and that kind of loyalty is nothing but intriguing. Quietly powerful, rather than in-your-face like characters like Deadlock, our broad and unyielding communications officer has contributed more to this cause than many of us could understand, and definitely knows about the time you sighed his name dreamily in the middle of the night.

I want to spend the night inside his chest, just once. I don't know what that says about me.

2 MEGATRON

Our Lord of Destruction might change his frame almost as often as Starscream, but whether he wears a bomber, a tank or a drill, he has never looked anything less than awe-inspiring.

This ranking is not a show of loyalty, either. This is purely carnal. I want him to punch me. I want him to charge up his fusion cannon and blow me away. I want to polish his helmet. Primus help me, I want him to tell me 'good job' at the end of a mission. I would die happily if he patted me on the shoulder.

1 DEATHSAURUS

And finally, we come to the championship winner, the Decepticon that ruined all other Decepticons for me; Deathsaurus.

Massive, deadly, and powerful with a wingspan that Primus himself would aspire to, he commands his crew with a firm, yet caring hand, protecting mechanical interests along the Outer Rim with deadly panache. He has faceplates so chiselled they could cut glass and an alt-mode so exotic I'm not even sure what it is.

Forget patting me on the shoulder, I think I'd die if he even looked at me. I challenge anyone to find a hotter Decepticon than this.

Final Note:
Feel welcome to argue with me if you want, but just know I will try to shoot you. Please don't embarrass yourself.

Editor's Note: *Please join us in paying tribute to Wingwrath, our beloved contributor. As our loyal readers probably already know, this was his last article before he was put on The List for infractions that Tarn, when asked to comment, called 'disgusting disrespect of our most noble leader' and 'he knows what he did', and went into hiding. We miss you, Wingwrath!*

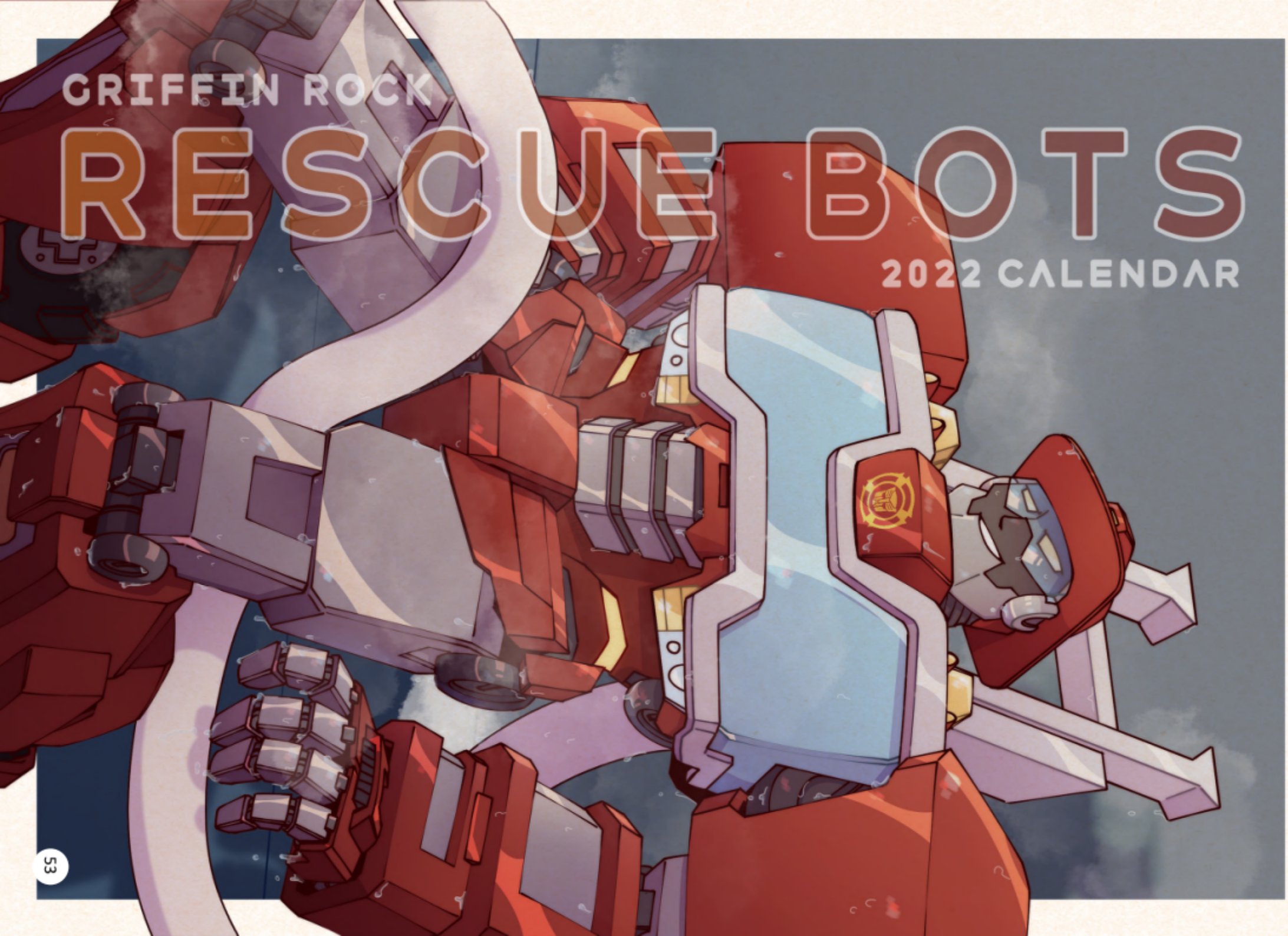
EXPRESSLY TAILORED TO THE PARTY´S TASTE

Bottoms Up

IN THIS ISSUE:
FEATURE BARTENDER
Swerve of Iacon, Swerve´s
BOTTLED OIL
MAKING TOASTS
featuring Ejector of Earth
NIGHTMARE FUELING YOUR DRINKS

& much more!

DARIIY
2021


GRIFFIN ROCK
RESCUE BOTS
2022 CALENDAR

DANGER!
DANGER

GETTING THE BEST OUT OF YOUR BREAK: ENERGON ADDITIVES AND YOU

Whether you're a Messatine miner keeping Cybertron well endowed, or an absolute *vision* strutting your stuff down Highlink Avenue, we're all in agreement that the working day is too long and our breaks too short. As we all know, solidarity in the form of organized labour can't *possibly* do anything to change this, so instead allow yourself to succumb to the tantalizing prospect of Energon Additives.

As the name implies, additives consist of a broad range of materials that can be *added* to your drink[1]. Created and curated for both flavour and fun, these cheap treats are a perfect way to uplift and alter your environment. Studies show that by enlisting a sense of control—even by changing one small thing around you, can have lasting mental benefits. And as the sponsor for this column requires us to remind you: the better you feel, the more efficient you'll work. So why not make a change to that tiresome slog you've been drinking day-in and day-out? After all, a stimulating enough modification of routine might just be the spark needed to pull you out of your rut.

In that spirit, Playbot presents this collection of starter picks for your perusal.

ADDITIVES TO TRY

CESIUM

A classic example of what an additive can be. Going down smooth & warm, this quality makes it perfect for even the coldest of climates, and will settle within your tanks quite nicely.
Coming in a vial, this Staff favourite is best paired with a warmed cube. The golden liquid will not mix fully, but create alluring swirls that will capture the spark of any passing mech. Do keep in mind that if the Cesium begins to crystallize either within its packaging or your drink, simply warm the liquid with your own frame temperature and it will return to its liquid state. If necessary, you may find the rest of this issue helpful in raising that base temperature.

EPSONITE

Astringent in taste with a hint of acidic flair, this guilty pleasure has the wonderful benefit of cooling your tanks and temporarily preventing overheating (duration dependent on frame size). Ideal for those who need a quick recovery after a nice long Playbot reading session.
Add a digit tips worth of this white fibrous powder, and be sure to mix well—you don't want to be caught on the receiving end of these unappealing clumps.

MELANTERITE CUBES

If the above are too tame for your glossa, try dropping a few of these green cubes in your drink—cold, warm, or however else you like it, the exhilaratingly spicy taste will leave you breathless and desperate for more. But taste alone isn't all Melanterite has to offer—its curiously soluble properties will create an exquisite show as it fizzes and 'sparks' while dissolving. The only struggle one might endure here, is finding an occasion this additive *doesn't* work well with.

WHITE PHOSPHORUS BY SENSONATE

Ideal for a mech in need of a frame-sized pick-me-up. The anti-galling and minor corrosion-resistant properties will have both you *and* your nanite colonies feeling like new again. This, paired with a playfully sweet but kicky aftertaste that pleasantly lingers, makes White Phosphorus an absolute treat. However when shopping for this additive, applying a digit discount is ill-advised. The White Phosphorus found in certain manufacturing plants have not been stabilized for consumption, and have a nasty habit of spontaneously combusting. Sensonate is the leading brand in both safety and batch consistency, and is highly recommended.

1 Playbot's legal team requires it to be noted that while the Additive industry is broad and constantly expanding, this does not include random rocks picked up off the ground. Always consult with your medic before ingesting materials and products unapproved by the Cybertronian Department of Digestible Consumables (CDDC)

STARBURST INYSPHORITE BY HYDRONOCKS

If you're looking for something with a little more pizazz, consider this your showstopper. Constructed in the processing plants of Koan solely for your pleasure, this additive starts off with an incredibly sweet tip that flares into a delightfully tangy aftertaste. Though flavour alone isn't what makes this treat special. The Starburst variety, HydroNocks' bestseller in their Insyphorite line, places the 'show' front and centre.

When Playbot staff dropped just one Starburst in a chilled cube, the additive began to glow from within as it dissolved, creating its defining flavour. The surface gently fizzed, producing a languid trailing brume. Depending on your specs, this reaction can warm the servos. Though we don't have any on staff, HydroNocks assures us that "even a mech with the most delicate sensors will remain comfortable holding their drink." With that in mind, it's not long before the Starburst nears the end of its physical form, and the charming glow begins to die down. Now, if you're drinking in the dark, that's unfortunately as far as the show goes. But if you're near a light source, you'll find the cube in your servos take on a shimmering appearance. A dazzling display of both color and sparkle reminiscent of the Iacon Crystal Gardens, there's no better way to feel like the Vosian elite.

So you're dutifully refueling, this time with flair — now what? After all, what you do while you drink is just as important as *what* you drink. So how can you best maximize your allotted break time? Well, there isn't much you *can* do. That's the beauty of it. Force yourself to relax. Take in the mechs around you, socialize if you're so inclined, or just enjoy the company of a good drink. After all, it only takes one small thing to bring about the largest of changes.

SHENANI
shenanisketches

SNOWII
SNOWii_Arts

KATYA SAIR
katya_sair

PRETENTIOUSFORK
Pretentiousfork

JAILBIRDDRAWS
jailbirddraws

NORRUANNA
norruanna.carrd.co

ROBOSOAPY
robosoapbar

COREARDE
CoreArde

POLLO POM
Pollo_pom

MYLA _ XAN
myxn.carrd.co

PATCH
patch_the_medic

CAMI (COEFORE)
COEFORE

FEF
Fef_Robot_Arts

AKUYATRON
Akuyatron_art

VIRTUAL NEMESIS
virtual_nemesis

PENULTIMAGENT
penultimagent

LIPASHEE
lipashee

SNICKERBY
snickerby

DREKKY DRIMM
drekkydrimm

EINVERSE
The_Einverse

ASHESFORDAYZ
Ashesfordayz

TARINATAR
linktr.ee/Tarinatar

TENEBRES
tenebres_for

RASPBERRY BORSCH
linktr.ee/RaspberryBorsch

ARTZRACHEL
Artzrachel

BLACKBERREH
BlackberrehArt

CANDY CHAMELEON
candychameleons

SHAPEOFMETAL
theshapeofmetal

VSILVER
silverlinedcoat

DAILYDURIAN
DailyDurian

KRINSYN
KrinSyn

SABRINANIGHTMAREN
SabbyNightmaren

DANSC
itsdansc

MIDDY
middy_draws

SPOOKYUNICORNUS
spookyunicornus

PIKA
deviantArt: pika

CONSTANT SCRIBBLES
C0nstantM0tion

SISI NORTH
Sisi_Esprit

DAZZLEDICTATOR
dazzledictator

MOUNTAIN GHOULS
mountainghouls

GABBYGERBS
GabbyGerbs

OREOGLITCH
oreo.glitch

NINTERBIT
ninterbit

DARIIY
skanda1i5t

BONANZA
bonanza_marco

VOYAHORA
voyahora

SALSA
salsadifragola

LOSINEKO
losineko

MERCH ARTISTS

BONANZA
DAZZLEDICTATOR
DREKKY DRIMM
EINVERSE
LOSINEKO
MIDDY
MYLA _ XAN
PRETENTIOUSFORK
SALSA
SHAPEOFMETAL
SHENANI

WRITERS

LANGUIDLY
languidly_
Languidly

CRIMSONSEEKERS
crimsonseekers
crimsonseekers

PIPER
pipermca
pipermca

MUSE
fab_roddy
Iron

TREBLETWENTY
TrebleTwenty

ANGRYSERVOS
angryservos
TheOtherEyeIsNotResponsive

ORGANIZERS, MODS AND ADDITIONAL CREDITS

GENERALBRI
CFAN PROJECTS
Production
Fulfillment
cfanprojects

DREKKY DRIMM
Administration
Graphics
Social Media
drekkydrimm

SPOOKYUNICORNUS
Administration
Coordination
Social Media
spookyunicornus

RASPBERRY BORSCH
Administration
Zine Idea

linktr.ee/RaspberryBorsch

DAZZLEDICTATOR
Mod
Book Layout
dazzledictator

NORRUANNA
Mod
Social Media
norruanna.carrd.co

SISI NORTH
Mod

Sisi_Esprit

CHALLY
Mod
Proofreading
Challengergirl9

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